



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

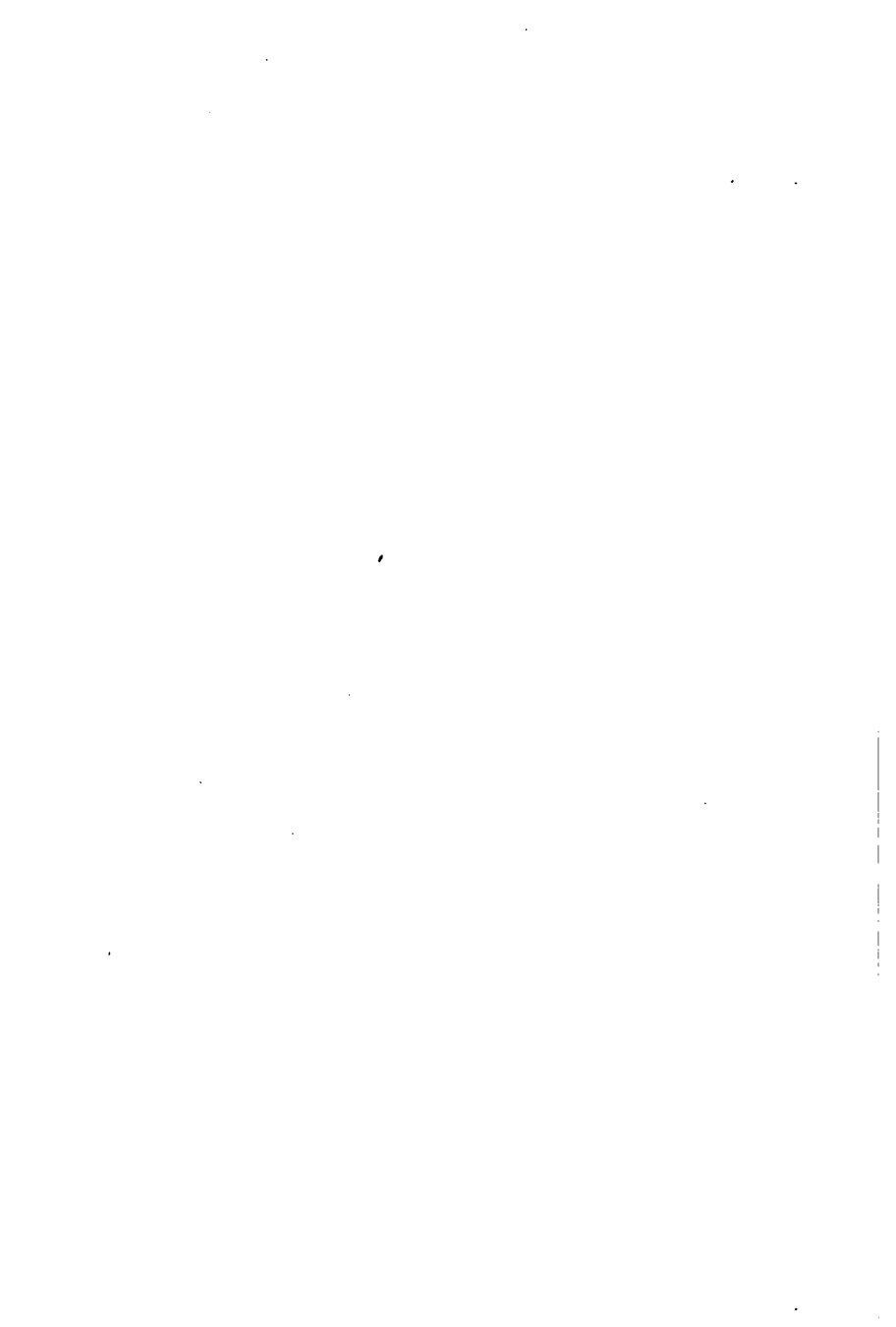
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

RIGHT
FOR
RIGHT'S SAKE







Right for Right's Sake.

BY

EMILY FLEMING.



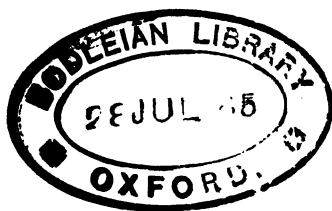
LONDON LITERARY SOCIETY,

ESTABLISHED 1879.

376, STRAND. W.C.

—
1884.

256.e. 1406



DARTFORD :

PRINTED BY J. SNOWDEN,

HIGH STREET.

CHAPTER I.

DOROTHEA BEDELL was rather a small child, of nine years old, when I first saw her. She had a shy look sometimes, and was too reserved and quiet for her age, though when amused she was very bright and merry, and her laugh most infectious ; still, there was in her face a sadness, as of a coming sorrow. I often stayed in the house of her parents, and was curiously interested in this lonely little girl. The family consisted of Dorothea's father and mother and two aunts, all of them more or less selfish, and not at all understanding the shy quiet child that was amongst them. Many a time have I seen her

wandering about the old-fashioned garden, with nothing to do and no one to speak to. If I asked her to take a walk with me she would brighten up, and a pretty flush would come into her face. A sad presentiment would come to me at these times, that sorrow was before her. Oh! if people who are thrown amongst children, would study their characters, enter into their troubles and pleasures, and for a time *be* a child, how much sorrow and suffering and wrong-doing might be saved in after life! When Dolly was about ten years old, a great sense of humour seemed to steal into her character; the earnest expression of her eyes would suddenly give place to a flash of merriment, and a quick clever answer would come when you least expected it. "How," I thought, "this child's character might be brought out to any extent; but who will do it?" The mother of Dorothy was a woman of extraordinary contradictions, but utterly devoid of that valuable but dangerous gift—originality. She was affectionate, but exacting, and the more she

loved the more she exacted, and inasmuch as the beautiful flower Love, was choked by the ill-weed selfishness, the result was a large amount of jealousy, and distrust of human nature under all aspects. Yet, for all this, she was a lovable woman in some points ; upright and truthful to a fault, if that be possible, and exceedingly gentle and good-tempered as a rule, which latter grace caused her to be magnetic with men of a domineering order. She had been an only child, much petted and spoilt, and had been brought up almost without even the ordinary outward observances of religion, so that what good points she had (which were many) were inherent in her nature, and had they been developed in her childhood she would probably have grown up a very different kind of woman, though she would always have been common-place enough. She was a young-looking, pretty woman, remarkable for quantities of golden hair, of which she was justly proud, one would think exactly the wrong mother for Dolly, for of motherliness she had

none, except the animal instinct of defence ; this would rise if occasion offered in a mild way. I say she seemed just the wrong mother for Dorothea ; but can it be so ?—perhaps in the Regeneration we shall find that *our* wrong ones are God's right ones : surely many a mother is the school-mistress used by God to train and educate one of His saintly ones for Himself by her very unmotherliness and indifference ! But, alas ! for the child while the training is going on. Dorothea's father was a man of average abilities, fond of his little girl because she was a Bedell, looking upon woman as an inferior being, his wife created expressly to order his dinner, knit his socks, and in 'all things to submit to that superior being man—in other words, himself. He was a good deal older than his wife, and ruled her in all things, except when her jealous disposition came into play ; however, this did not often happen, as he was a quiet-going sort of man, so that their lives glided on pretty smoothly. Dorothy's two aunts were two

elderly sisters of Mr. Bedell's. Circumstances had acted upon their shallow natures, and made them irritable, dressy, and specially snubby to Dolly, whose numerous questions, and clear-sightedness, served as a constant reproach to them. They did many an act of kindness outside the house, or even to their own servants, yet were not loved, because the kindness was done from an elevation—not as between woman and woman, or as between woman and man ; but as a condescension from lady to inferior.

CHAPTER II.

“DOLLY! Dolly! where are you?” This from a rather thin, discontented voice, one day in the garden of Wenden House. “Where is that stupid child? Dolly, come here directly.”

But there was no answer. Mrs. Bedell walked slowly down the avenue, and turned up a narrow path. Presently she heard a hard cough, and, opening a door, she passed into a large kitchen-garden, where an old man was digging potatoes.

“Have you seen Miss Dorothy, Crow?”

“Lor! mem, I do b’lieve Miss Dorothy’s in the stable-yard; I seed her jist now a passing, I do b’lieve as she wor a crying, mem.”

"Crying," what can *she* have to cry about, naughty child? in the stable-yard, too."

Mrs. Bedell pursued her way to the stable-yard, with not a pleasant expression in her face. On arriving there, a curious vision met her view. Sitting on the stump of a tree, evidently used for beheading various well-fed and youthful fowls and ducks, was Dolly. Tears were streaming down her cheeks, which were very black; her cotton dress was dirty and torn, her whole appearance that of utter despair. On her lap was the cause of all this misery, in the shape of a small white bantam, evidently breathing its last.

"Dolly, put that horrid fowl down this instant!"

"I can't, mamma."

"Why not?" said her mother.

"Because it is dying," said Dolly steadily.

"You are to do as I tell you—do you hear?"

No answer, but a look and a flash in the child's eye which ought not to have been there—*only* a

look, but a straw will show which way the wind blows. The child remained where she was ; the mother looked at her. Who was to conquer ?

“ You are to put it down and follow me into the house,” she said ; then turned and walked away.

Dorothy's tears began to drop, drop ; but she never let the bantam go. In about half-an-hour it died. Dolly placed it tenderly under a tree, covered it with leaves, and went into the house.

CHAPTER III.

DOROTHY'S governess was a girl of about twenty, common-place, but very kind and just to her little pupil; and interesting, because very musical, and gifted with a beautiful voice. She was the daughter of a country parson, who had long vegetated in a remote village, doing but little good amongst his people because of the narrowness of his intellect and the smallness of his heart. Those who knew him well, knew also that he would be found in the Fields of Light hereafter, but to outsiders it was a doubtful question. He was a man as absolutely without *influence* as it is possible to be; his doctrine was good, in so far as he admonished his hearers to

choose the narrow road, and enter in by the wicket-gate ; but there he ceased to admonish—the wicket-gate and the Golden City were one and the same thing in his eyes. As to any assistance in walking in the narrow road, it never so much as entered his head to preach that ; the poor tempted ones were never shown the danger of the gaps in the hedges through which things looked so pleasant, or the stones on the road, or the deep holes of unbelief into which they might stumble in the dark night of sorrow. Consequently, these poor people (I say poor, though they were not all poor in earthly goods ; but all are poor who do not know the truth) were in a state of moral starvation, and there was none to give them bread. The cause of this famine in the soul of Mr. Fairfax may be attributed partly to the death of his wife, who died after they had been married about five years. This saintly woman was probably wanted for a higher sphere of work, and was called away just when it seemed she was most needed on earth. After

her death Mr. Fairfax, who was one of those men who cannot walk alone spiritually, fell into a state of religious self-satisfaction and indolence. There were two services at the church on Sundays, and that was about all; daily intercourse with his people was a thing unknown to him—he spent his time in writing a book on “The wonders of the insect world,” quite ignoring the human and sinning world toiling and moiling at his gate. His daughter Agatha feeling herself not much required at home, and money being scarce, resolved to do something for herself. She was one of those placid people who, though never very keen about what she wanted, always managed to get it easily—she saw Mr. Bedell’s advertisement in the paper, answered it, and was selected as governess to Dorothy. Though not sympathizing with the child in the peculiarities of her passionate and earnest nature, yet she did a good deal for her in instilling into her mind a large amount of religious head-knowledge, which served Dolly in good stead in after years.

CHAPTER IV.

THE bantam's funeral took place with much solemnity two days after its decease. It was laid to rest under a Yew tree in the garden, a coffin had been unearthed from the lumber-room, in the shape of a wooden box, bearing the rather inappropriate words on the outside, "condensed milk." The old gardener officiated as sexton and clergyman, Dolly walking behind as chief mourner, she having found in her nurse's drawer a large piece of rusty crape, which she had twisted round her hat, over the blue ribbon; a large black retriever, known by the name of "Smutty," walking with measured tread by her side. Poor little Dorothy! all this was as real to her at the time as greater sorrows would

be afterwards ; she mourned for months for her pet—no one knew how this first grief weighed upon her poor little heart, but it was characteristic of the child that she never spoke of it ; yet if anyone had kissed her tenderly, or any book or song had touched her deeper feelings, she would have cried long and bitterly, and it would not have been only sorrow for her lost favourite. The disobedience to her mother still rankled in her heart, for hers was such a true nature that she felt the sin keenly, though not yet knowing with heart-knowledge the Father above who was training her even then for Himself. I have said the child's nature was true, yet her actions and words were not always so ; like most sensitive and affectionate people, she loved to be loved, and hated to be scolded or thought badly of. This love of approbation was one of the faults she had most to struggle against through all the early years of her life. Mrs. Bedell's hard but truthful nature could not brook falsehood for a moment, and, having no

sympathy for human weaknesses, she would instantly lose her temper with Dolly if she suspected any equivocation, and paralyse the child with fear. About this time a ward of Mr. Bedell's came to stay at Wendon. He was a handsome, fair-haired boy, whose character we shall know more of as we go on. Dolly was, of course, delighted to have a companion; it seemed like the beginning of a new life to her. It was arranged that he was to spend his summer holidays at Wenden, and the winter ones at his uncle's house in London, for two years; he would then go to a "coach" for naval examinations. At present he was away from school, in consequence of scarlet fever having broken out amongst the boys. The day after his arrival he was out of doors at six o'clock, making his arrangements for a fishing excursion in the neighbourhood. He returned to the house for the school-room breakfast at eight o'clock, and at once demanded Dolly's company for the day.

"You must come out with me and fish."

2

"Fish?" said Dolly, "I don't know how."

"Oh! never mind, you will soon learn; and if you don't care to fish you can bait my hooks, you know."

"Oh! I should love it," said Dolly, looking with pleading eyes at Miss Fairfax.

It was never necessary for her to ask for anything, her eyes always told the tale.

"You may have a holiday to-day," said Miss Fairfax, thawing beneath Arthur's sweet nature; "but mind you come home in time for luncheon. You had better put your old dress and hat on."

"Oh!" said Arthur, "you may trust me for being home for dinner, I shall be as hungry as a parrot when it is being starved to make it ask for what it wants."

He jumped out of the window and disappeared as he spoke. The old hat and dress were soon put on, and the two children started for the pond. It was an exquisite May morning. Their way led through some of the most picturesque scenery in Somersetshire. First, a long narrow

lane, with hedges far above their heads, these green walls giving one that curious sensation of happy isolation which those who live in the west country know so well. The red sandstone could be seen here and there, and poly-pody and harts-tongue ferns, reached forth their long fronds lovingly to the children as they went along. Arthur dressed his companion in flowers and leaves, till she looked like a sweet May Queen, her pure dark eyes shining forth like two beacons of hope. After about three-quarters of a mile, they turned off from the lane into a meadow green as emerald, over a stile, and down a steep bank, where they came to some fir trees—close to these trees was the pond, about a quarter of a mile in length. Even as they came near, that circle with the well known bubble in the centre, so magical in its effect upon the mind of an ardent angler, rose to the surface of the dark pool.

“Look!” said Arthur, seizing Dolly’s hand,
“a fish.”

Dolly looked into the air about a yard above the surface of the water. "I don't see anything."

"See anything! of course not, if you gaze up into the sky. You might as well expect to see a sky-lark swimming in the water. But," said the boy, mockingly, "you girls are all alike."

Poor Dolly! how deeply she felt the inferiority of her sex at this moment. "Oh! if I were only a boy!" she thought sorrowfully.

Arthur noticed a shadow on her face, and, being a true little gentleman at heart, he at once put his arm round his companion's neck and kissed her. "I'm awfully sorry," he said.

"Sorry," said Dolly, "what for?"

"For making you look like that."

"Oh! I wish I were a boy," said she, in a voice which seemed to say, "do forgive me for being what I am!"

"I wish you were, too," said Arthur honestly; "but never mind, it can't be helped. You're an awfully jolly little girl anyway. Now let us

begin to fish. We'll walk on and try and find a nice dark pool. I've brought a rod for you."

They walked slowly round the bank, and presently came to a narrow part of the lake where there was a small natural island.

"This will do. Now, Dolly, let us put the rods together," and he began to place the slender stems into each other, Dolly helping him with earnest face and clever fingers. "Now for the bait!—you bait your hook and I'll do mine." He handed a long worm to his companion.

"Oh! Arthur, I couldn't."

"Couldn't what?" said the boy, opening his eyes in astonishment.

"I couldn't put a hook through that poor thing—why, its *alive*!"

"Of course it is—why, you said you would love to do it this morning."

"Oh! I did not mean that; I meant I should love to come out with you."

"Oh!" said Arthur, "and I thought you were such a stunning girl not to mind putting bait on.

Well, I suppose you won't object to catching a fish if you get a chance?"

"Not if you kill it directly," said Dolly, sensibly.

"Oh, yes! you only have to knock it on the head with a stick," said Arthur. "I'll kill it fast enough if you catch it," he added, rather satirically. Arthur threw the line into the water. "Now, Dolly, you must hold it like this, and when you see the float bob under the water you will know a fish is at it; then you must let him get well on before you pull him up. I am going a little farther on."

The morning wore on, but with apparently little success; and the children were thinking of putting their rods up.

"I will go to the end of the pond, Dolly," said Arthur, "and you can call me if you want me. I sha'n't be long." So saying the boy went off.

In a few minutes there was an ominous quiver in the line, then the float bobbed under the

water, and Dolly felt herself being drawn along the bank. What should she do? She called Arthur, but there was no reply. Meantime the fish might escape. There was only one course open to her—she must land him herself. She began to wind up the wheel as she had seen Arthur do; the fish continued to pull violently, the rod became bent like a bow, but still Dolly held steadily on, though her arm began to ache—gradually the line came closer to the bank, and with a last effort she pulled up to the surface of the water an immense shining perch. There he lay on the bank, panting and bleeding, his beautiful silver sides glistening in the sun. Poor Dolly looked sadly at this work of destruction, and felt like a murderess. How different from the sense of joy and triumph she had anticipated! Surely this poor panting fish ought to be put out of its misery. But she had never killed anything larger than a wasp—how *could* she do it? And yet it must not suffer any longer. She called Arthur loudly, but no answer came.

At last kindness conquered self—she ran and picked up a large bough that lay near; she hesitated one instant, then struck the creature boldly on the head, once, twice, saw that he was dead, then covered her face with her hands, and ran out of sight, sat down under a tree, and cried bitterly.

In a few minutes Arthur came whistling up to the place where he had left his little friend. “Come along, Dolly; let’s go home,” said the boy, from the other side of a tree. “Why,” said he, coming round and seeing the perch lying on the ground, “she has actually caught a fish! But where is she?” He called and looked all round; presently he saw a bit of blue dress, behind a tree a little way off, and ran up to it. “Why, what are you crying about, Dolly?—are you hurt?” He sat down by her side, and put his arm round her, “Dear little Dolly, do tell me what it is?”

“That poor fish,” sobbed the child; “I have killed it.”

"Of course you have, but aren't you glad?"

"Oh! no; I'll never, never do such a thing again."

"Is that all you are crying about, Dolly?" said Arthur wonderingly.

"Ye-es," sobbed Dolly.

"Well, never mind, dear; he is quite dead now—so let us go home to dinner. Come, get up!" He took his pocket-handkerchief out of his pocket, and dried her eyes gently.

This loving sympathy soon began to tell upon the child, it was so new to her; she got up and walked slowly by Arthur's side, then he suddenly left her and ran on ahead. With ready tact remembering that she might not wish to see the slain one again, he put it into his creel and they both set out homewards.

They did not talk much on the way, only once Dolly's face lit up, and she said, "I have caught a fish though I *am* a girl, Arthur."

He made no answer, only laughing, and inwardly rejoicing at seeing her merry again.

CHAPTER V.

THAT summer and the next passed quickly away, and the two children became like brother and sister. They told each other all their pleasures and troubles when together, and wrote to each other when apart; and Dolly's brightness and cleverness increased under this new bond of sympathy. The last Christmas came before Arthur was to go to Portsmouth for his naval studies, and it was arranged that Dolly should spend the holidays in London for the first time, at the house of Arthur's uncle. How she looked forward to this six weeks! She had once been in London for a day or two—how well she remembered the lovely toy shops, the streets lit by

lamp-light, and all the sights and sounds which children love so much for a short time, until they begin to miss the freedom and sweet air of the country. Dolly was now nearly thirteen, and was able to appreciate beauty in any form, more than most children of her age. She would have one companion at the Dickson's, a girl rather older than herself, whom Arthur talked much about. The 23rd of December arrived at last; Miss Fairfax took her departure for the holidays, and Dolly was taken up to London, by her old nurse. On arriving at Kensington Garden Square, a tall girl came to the hall-door to meet her—she had large eyes, a small nose, and rather a large mouth, not exactly pretty, but a face that twinkled all over when she spoke, and a serio-comic air which was irresistible.

“Oh! here you are at last,” she said, “what a long time you have been coming from the Station. No wonder”—looking at the cab-horse—“with such an animal as that; it ought to be petrified, and sent to South Kensington as a

‘ study of bones ’ for the art students ; but come along upstairs to the school-room,” so saying, she bounded up the staircase, followed by Dolly, who was slightly amazed at this reception.

When they reached the school-room Nina kissed her again, took off her things, drew up a chair for Dolly near the fire, and planting herself in a large basket one herself, with her feet nearly on the bars, said, “ Now then, Dorothy, let us have a chat, I have heard a great deal about you from the Knight of the Round Table, you know.”

“ Who is that ? ” said Dolly.

“ Why, Arthur Hazeldine,” said the girl, “ have you never heard about King Arthur.”

“ Oh ! yes ; Arthur was telling me about him last summer,” said Dolly.

“ How old are you ? ”

“ Thirteen next month,” said Dolly promptly.

“ And I shall be blushing sixteen next month ; but as I have a fixed blush (pointing to her red cheeks) I fear I shall not be given credit for the amount of modesty I possess. Do you know, we are

going to have theatricals next month; we think of having Hans Andersen's 'Snow Maiden' and 'The Little Tin Soldier,' you will have to act, *can* you act?" she said, turning round suddenly to Dolly.

"I think I could," said the child simply.

"You look as if you could," said Nina, "and you don't seem 'umble, so I think you will be all right. What are you going to call me?"

"I suppose I must call you 'Nina;' but you don't look like it," said Dolly, raising her beautiful eyes to her companion's face with an abstracted air.

"Everyone calls me 'Ninny,'" said the girl, "perhaps you think I look more like that."

"Yes, much more," said Dolly gravely.

Nina burst out laughing. "Well, I declare! I never expected this; here is a young friend come to stay with me for six long weeks, and before she has been an hour in the house, she says I look like an idiot."

"You know I did not think of that," laughed Dolly, "but you *don't* look like Nina."

The children chatted on for some time, then Nina said, "We shall have tea up here by ourselves to-day, father and mother have gone to a concert, and our governess has gone home. Have you ever seen my mother?" with one of her sudden movements.

"No," said Dolly, "is she like you?"

"Like me," said the girl, scornfully; "I should think not: I will show you what she is like," and she drew her companion to the window, where the blind had not yet been drawn down. "She is like that," pointing to one beautiful star shining over the gardens of the square; "she is just one alone far above everyone else—there is no one in the world like her, my own beautiful mother," the girl's whole face softened and glowed as she spoke. A pang shot through Dolly's heart—how she wished she could love her mother like this! Nina looked at her quickly, then suddenly kissed her, and, putting an arm round the child's waist, drew her out of the room to show her the house.

CHAPTER VI.

THE same evening Dorothy was called down from the school-room to see Mrs. Dickson. The child took one long earnest look at her as she went into the room, and in that moment she knew she had found a friend. I think children's first impressions are very seldom wrong in judging whom they may trust; their very guilelessness is their safeguard in most cases—anything that is good either in man or woman must come to the surface when brought into contact with a little child; if it is not so, then indeed must the image of God be almost extinct in that man or woman's soul. It would be difficult to describe Mrs.

Dickson ; but she was one of those women in whom happiness and love had brought out everything that is beautiful and of good report in her character. She was one of the few to whom one might truthfully use the word, "saintly." Her husband was suited to her in every way ; he was intellectual in the highest degree, unselfish and intensely affectionate ; but impatient and intolerant of injustice or insincerity in any form, and was an extreme Liberal in politics. His wife's calm judgment and common sense was an immense boon to him, in softening his occasionally rather hard estimates of the conduct and characters of those amongst whom he was thrown in public or private life.

When Dorothy entered the drawing-room, Mrs. Dickson came forward to meet her. She was dressed for the evening, in a long black velvet dress, with no ornaments or trimmings, except some delicate white lace round neck and sleeves. The extreme simplicity of the dress suited her well, and gave her almost a youthful appearance.

Her steadfast blue eyes were calm and sweet, as she drew Dolly towards her, and made her sit down on a low chair by her side, then talked to her about her home, her pets, and lastly of Arthur Hazeldine. Dorothy soon lost all feeling of strangeness.

The next day Arthur arrived, to the delight of the two girls, and in the afternoon they all went out to buy Christmas presents. How happy Dorothy was! Another child with a brighter home would have missed it at this happy Christmas-tide; but not so Dorothy. She loved her mother and her home dearly, but Christmas there was no different to any other time of the year; there were no bright greetings or merry makings, the day was only distinguished by attendance at morning church, followed by the inevitable plum pudding. The Dickson's house was altogether a new atmosphere; a spirit of unity and concord breathed through the house, and made itself felt by everyone who entered the doors. On the 25th the children breakfasted in the dining-room,

which meal was not till nine o'clock, an hour later than usual, as Mr. and Mrs. Dickson went to the early Sacred Feast at the House of God, to offer their first thoughts of praise to Him who sent the Christ-child to this earth. Dorothy found on her plate a pretty silver necklace from Mrs. Dickson, a gold pencil-case from Arthur, and mounting guard over them was a little Dresden shepherdess, crook in hand, from Nina, a letter from her mother also made Dorothy's happiness complete. What a merry breakfast it was! How the children and even Mr. Dickson laughed and chaffed each other, and from the end of the table that sweet Madonna face, glowing with holy and happy thoughts, shed its brightness over them all; she was indeed like the beautiful planet that Nina had pointed out.

They all went to church at eleven o'clock, and such a burst of song came from the choir as brought the tears to Dorothy's eyes. She had never been inside a London church before, and the white-robed choristers, the exquisite white

Christmas roses and immortelles with which the altar was decorated, the full yet modulated singing—all seem to have come from another world, to her excited imagination. The sermon was from the words “Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king.” It was short and beautiful, and clear enough for the youngest child to understand, “*only* those,” said the preacher, “can follow the Man of Sorrows through trial and suffering who have that child-like simplicity ‘concerning evil’ which *He* had, that disregard of worldly favour, of the opinion of others, of earthly love, of all that these poor bodies hold most dear, of even life itself, provided only *He* pleased the Father. Follow Him, dear friends,” he said, and his face was illuminated as he spoke —“through good report and evil report, give up *all* things if necessary for God, and right, and verily you shall have your reward,—not the kingdom; that is but a secondary consideration, though you shall have that too; but the love of the Father.” Dorothy never forgot that sermon,

child as she was, it came to memory in after years like the voice of some loving friend who being dead yet speaketh.

In the afternoon they all went with toys, crackers, and picture-books to a Hospital for Children in the neighbourhood, and brought happiness to many a sad little heart and weary body. The Christmas dinner took place at half-past six. Some cousins of Nina's of the name of Henderson added to the party, and in the evening were games, ghost-stories and dancing.

The children all went to bed, only to dream of all the happy events of the day, Dorothy's dream alone is worth recording. She thought she was walking along a pleasant road, when suddenly darkness closed around her, and the way became a tangled mass of thorns and briars and thistles, in front and on one side of her, and on the other side was deep and dangerous water. Far ahead, on slightly elevated ground, stood a Man, holding in one hand a large and beautiful star, which shed a ray of light straight down to

where Dorothy stood ; in the other hand He held a crown of twisted thorns, but on the point of each thorn glittered a precious stone. The Man's eyes were loving and compassionate, and Dorothy knew it to be the Man of Sorrows, but the face was that of the preacher she had heard the day before.

CHAPTER VII.

THE next day the children started for a good morning's skating at the Botanical Gardens. Dorothy, though she had lived in the country all her life, had never learnt to skate ; but with the help of her friends she soon managed to get steady on her feet, though for the first hour her ankles twisted about in a hopeless manner. As whatever our little Dorothy attempted to do she did well, she was soon skimming over the ice gracefully enough. The second day's skating she enjoyed thoroughly ; after that snow began to fall steadily, which kept the children more indoors. The time had now come to settle the

important matter of the theatricals. The little Hendersons came constantly to the house, and many solemn conclaves took place over the school-room fire. "The Snow Maiden" and "The Tin Soldier" were given up as too complicated, and other fairy tales came under discussion.

"I have set my heart on Dolly acting the 'Little Match-seller,'" said Nina, on the second day of consultation.

"Oh! it will make people so sad," said Dolly.

"That doesn't matter if we have a bright one afterwards," said Nina. "But mother had much better settle it," she added, running off to fetch her mother. In a few minutes she came back, followed by Mrs. Dickson. There was a shout of delight from all the children, and she was forcibly installed in the most comfortable chair.

"Now, motherling, you decide for us," said Nina, excitedly. "How many pieces ought we to have?"

"Two will be quite enough," said her mother,

“a long one and a short one. I think you might have ‘Cinderella’ for the first one; and what for the second?” she paused thoughtfully.

“‘The Little Match-seller,’” said Nina, promptly.

“Capital!” said Mrs. Dixon. “In that case ‘Cinderella’ must come second.”

“Now for the parts,” said Arthur.

“Do not give us difficult parts,” said one of the Henderson girls shyly, “we have never acted before.”

“If you would really *rather* not take a prominent part,” said Mrs. Dickson, “Nina had better be Cinderella.” Then turning to Jack Henderson, “Will you be the Prince?”

“Oh, no!” said Jack, a pleasant, very quiet-looking boy of about fourteen; “I would much rather not.”

Mrs. Dickson saw that the boy really meant what he said, so it was arranged for Arthur to be the Prince.

“Now for the Match-girl,” said Nina, with a

questioning look at her mother.

“Dorothy, decidedly,” said Mrs. Dickson, quietly; “there can be no question about that character. Now, children, you must throw your whole minds into this affair; I cannot have you do it at all unless it is done well. You may have the use of most of my clothes,” she added, smiling; “any extra costumes and scenery that you may want I will hire for you, but I do not wish you to be dependent upon me, but to exercise your own common sense in arranging your dresses according to the descriptions which you will find in the fairy tales. I shall be present generally at your practices and rehearsals; but do not expect me to give you many ideas,” she said laughing, “for I do not intend to do so.”

The children worked away after this, as steadily as their numerous parties and engagements would allow them to do. They managed to have a rehearsal about twice a-week. At last the eventful 25th of January came, and the numerous little and big people who had been

invited began to arrive. They took their seats in rows in the large front drawing-room, and at seven o'clock the curtain rose, and there was a suppressed murmur of pleasure from old and young. The first scene was a London street ; it was night, and the snow was falling in large soft flakes. A little girl with bare head and feet walked slowly along, her clothes were torn, and her long fair hair hung limp and tangled down her back, as the snow fell upon her. She wore a tattered apron, and in it she carried some bundles of matches ; one box she held in her hand. Lights were shining in the houses around her. At last she sat down in a corner between two houses, huddling herself up ; she rubbed her little cold hands together, and looking hopelessly around—she closed her eyes. In a few moments she struck a match, when suddenly a warm stove seemed to rise up in front of her, then as she was stretching her cold feet towards it, the match went out, and the stove vanished. She lit another match, and she seemed to see

into a beautiful dining-room, the table was spread for dinner, a large goose was on it, suddenly that too disappeared, and the little girl was left in darkness. She struck one more match, and a Christmas-tree was before her, covered with tapers and toys; she smiled and eagerly stretched out her thin hands, as she did so the tree seemed to glide away from her into the night. This was the end of the first scene. There was a breathless pause, and the curtain rose again. The lights were all gone, the snow had ceased, only the bright stars shone over-head; one fell from the sky, leaving a streak of light behind it, the child still lay on the ground, with her eyes closed, "Someone has died," she muttered as the star fell, then rubbed a match against the wall. As she did so a woman stood before her; the face was beautified and bright, but it was the face of her grandmother still. "Grandmother," said the little one, "take me with you. I know you will go away from me like the beautiful stove, the roast goose, and the

glorious Christmas-tree." But the grandmother took the child up gently, and carried her away into the starry sky. The curtain dropped for an instant, then rose again. The child lay dead, with the matches in her hand. A tall, compassionate looking man, passed by, and looked at her, "She tried to keep herself warm," he said, as he noticed the burnt matches by her side.

When the curtain dropped for the last time there was silence in the room for a few moments, then rose a shout of applause.

"Who is that lovely child?" said one lady; "how exactly her face suited the part."

"Did not Mrs. Dickson make a lovely grandmother?" said one of the little Hendersons to a girl sitting next to her.

"How exquisitely unconscious she was all the time," said a young man of about eight-and-twenty, with deep earnest eyes, "I shall never forget that child's expression," he added half to himself. He went out of the room, took up his

hat, and left the house. He had a dinner engagement that night.

Then followed "Cinderella," which was equally successful. Nina acted her part to perfection, with her pretty pert ways, and half-frightened audacity. Arthur made a most devoted Prince, and, being a very tall boy, did not look too young for the part. The two Henderson girls were the sisters. Arthur's gravity nearly gave way when placing the slipper on Nina's little foot; but a warning look from her, accompanied by an almost imperceptible kick, put him on his good behaviour again. The fairy godmother was admirably done by Jack Henderson, in a mask.

The children danced till supper-time, the "little match-seller" being one of the merriest of the party,—and all then dispersed.

A few days afterwards Arthur Haseldine took his departure for the training-ship to which he had been appointed after passing his examinations. He took a loving farewell of the girls

and of Mrs. Dickson, who loved him as a son. The girls missed him woefully, and seemed to lose interest in everything for days afterwards. Nina's bright nature soon recovered; but Dorothy could not easily get over the loss of her first *real* friend. She soon returned to Wenden, where we must leave her for a few years. During this time she saw her friends occasionally, and was confirmed with Nina about two years after Arthur went away.

CHAPTER VIII.

DURING the last year of Miss Fairfax's stay at Wendon, Dorothy had noticed a great change in her governess. Her manner, though equally composed, was brighter and more animated than before. Dolly observed that she gave more time to practising both music and singing, also from time to time would arrive new songs, and occasionally a book of sonatas, always with the initials "A. F., from H. T. B." on the fly-leaf. Added to this, on her return from her summer holidays she wore for the first time, on her left hand, a small opal ring. Now, Agatha Fairfax had remarkably pretty hands; they were hands

that you could not fail to notice, and they had been conspicuous hitherto from their complete absence of adornment. Putting two and two together, Dorothy came to the conclusion that her governess must be engaged to be married. Having settled this matter in her own mind, Dorothy thought very little more about it, and, as Agatha seemed rather to avoid talking on the subject of marriage or engagements generally, the affair almost passed from Dolly's mind. To solve the mystery, we must carry our thoughts for a little while to a village in Sussex.

On a hot July afternoon a young man was walking along a quiet lane ; he was beginning to feel rather weary from the heat, when, in turning an abrupt angle, he found himself close to a village or hamlet, clustering round a small church. He walked slowly on towards it, when, as he drew near, he heard the sound of the organ ; the door was open, the building looked cool and inviting, and he determined to go in and rest for a few moments : he raised his hat,

and, passing through the porch, sat down in a pew out of sight of the organ chamber. He looked round the building with a criticising air. "Evidently a Low church, and much out of repair," he said to himself, as he noticed the discoloured walls, the faded altar cloth, the old-fashioned pews, with here and there a torn hymn-book lying on the ground. Suddenly he caught sight of a Norman arch almost concealed by the corner of a hideous gallery. "This is too horrible," he muttered half aloud. At this moment a woman's voice rose from the organ, clear, sweet, and powerful—she was singing the hymn, "Lead, kindly Light." The man listened intently, and as the last two lines,

"And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since and lost awhile,"

died away softly and tenderly, he stepped forward and stood facing the singer. She, quite unconscious of the presence of a stranger, turned over some loose music by her side, then opened a

rather torn copy of the "*Elijah*," and in a few moments the organ rolled forth, the simple but lovely symphony to "O rest in the Lord;" then the voice began gently and solemnly, gradually increasing in power, "He shall give thee thy heart's desire," then slowly fading away almost to a whisper at the end. After it was over, the singer rose up to go. Having collected her books, she was turning round to leave the church, when she suddenly saw the stranger standing close to her. She bowed, and accidentally dropped a book in doing so. The young man picked it up, also bowing courteously. She took the book composedly.

"Would you care to see any more of the church?" she asked, looking at him inquiringly. "There are some brasses in the side aisle which might interest you."

"Thank you, I should much like to see them," said the stranger.

Miss Fairfax (for she it was) led the way to the side aisle, where was a very fine brass of a

man in armour and a lady by his side. The young man examined them carefully ; then, after asking a few questions as to the antiquity of the church, he said, " I am staying with my mother and sister a few miles off ; might I be allowed to take the impression of these brasses another day ? "

" Certainly," said Miss Fairfax ; " my father is the vicar, and the keys are kept at our house close by, and can be had at any time. I must lock you out now," she added smiling, and locking the door behind them, then, bowing slightly, she left him.

The young man walked slowly down the road whistling softly. " A more collected girl I have never seen," said he to himself ; " but very good-natured and I should say uncommonly sensible—she ought to be beautiful, with such a voice. She isn't bad though on the whole. What a mercy to see a woman without any affectation," he added sighing reflectively. " So her father is the vicar, is he ? He must be a nice specimen

to leave his church in such a state!" and in the multitude of his thoughts he walked slowly home.

Henry Thorold Brackenbury was the son of a solicitor, who had died some years previously, leaving a widow, one son, and one daughter. The mother and daughter had lived for several years in the suburbs of London, so as to make a home for Thorold (called Thorold from childhood because of his father's name being Henry). This year they had taken a cottage for the summer months in Sussex, this accounting for Thorold's appearance at Stoneford. Thorold was a man who once known could never be forgotten. It was not so much his appearance which impressed the beholder, for some men would hardly have thought him noticeable (though I think few *women* would have passed him by); but it was the beautiful soul which burnt with such a steady light within, and showed itself through the windows of his black deeply-set eyes. They were eyes that looked

through and through you once, and haunted you for ever after. His hair was smooth, and black as a raven's wing; the broad sensible forehead, firm jaw, and slightly aquiline nose, told of determination and self-control; the sweet firm mouth, almost hidden by a heavy moustache, told of a world of sympathy and steadfastness; for the rest, he had a rather short, well-knit figure, and an exquisitely sympathetic tenor voice. He was fond of society, and though now thirty-two had hitherto looked upon all women with comparative indifference. In fact, it might be almost said he had a contempt for the women whom he met in society; his being a strong nature, their insipid remarks irritated him on the one hand, and on the other hand an *advanced* woman was in his sight a delusion and a snare. Never yet had he seen a woman to come up to his ideal. He was a High Churchman, but without the narrowness and formality of a Ritualist, and had all a High Churchman's veneration for everything that is pure and elevated in woman.

Love would be to him all-sufficing when it came, because it would appeal to all that was high and noble in his nature. Music was to him a passion, and a musical soul could not fail to strike a sympathetic chord in his. This it was which interested him in Miss Fairfax on their first meeting, and her beautiful voice rang in his ears. Two days afterwards Thorold called at the Vicarage for the keys of the church. Mr. Fairfax was in his garden, saw him and invited him into the house. As it happened Agatha was at home. He found her pleasant looking, and she talked sensibly but without originality, on different subjects, and especially about music, and musical composers. He went away pleased with his visit, and Mr. Fairfax expressed a hope of seeing him again. After this Thorold's visits became frequent. He always found Agatha calm and sensible, ready to play his accompaniments, or sing duetts with him at any time. Things drifted on until he really believed himself to be in love at last. He saw Agatha was pleased to

see him, and he thought what a kind, sensible wife she would make. Yes! he certainly must be in love!

One day when they were singing together, he said, "Agatha, I am a poor man, do you think you could love me, and wait for me?"

She blushed slightly, looked up at him, and answered quietly, "Yes;" and so they were engaged, and Agatha went back to work, and wait quietly till Thorold should have a rise in his office, when he would be in a position to marry her. Her one stipulation was that their engagement should be kept a secret from the outside world.

CHAPTER IX.

IN a small house in a quiet street not far from the Kensington Gardens, about one year after the date of our last chapter, two ladies are sitting over their afternoon tea. The elder of the two is a comely looking woman, but with a singularly discontented expression in her rather faded blue eyes. In the younger face we recognise our old friend Dorothy. The deep, truthful eyes are just the same, with perhaps a greater earnestness in their depth. I think the first impression made upon one by Dorothy would be, that she was peculiar looking, more than beautiful, pretty she could never be called. Then you would try to

discover the colour of her eyes—for a few minutes you would feel sure that they were dark grey; then she would smile or laugh, and you would feel perplexed, and think they must be brown or hazel; then at another time you would almost think them dark blue: but the fact is they were none of these colours, but that shade which it is impossible to describe, but which is really nearer green than any other. Her hair was golden-brown, and exquisitely soft in texture, carelessly put up, and drooping over her low, broad forehead; her mouth and teeth were perfect. She wore a warm black dress, her only ornament a richly crimson chrysanthemum, pinned near her pretty throat with a silver arrow. Lady—was written in every look and movement.

They sat silent for some time, and then Mrs. Bedell spoke in a sharp querulous voice, "Since your father's death I have never been paid proper attention to. I am thoroughly misunderstood," she added, with a sigh.

"What can I do for you, mamma," said

Dorothy, quietly, struggling against the conviction in her own mind that there was nothing in her mother to understand.

“If you cared for me you would put down your book and talk to me; but you do nothing but read all day long. I wish I had not allowed you to join the Library.”

Dorothy put away the magazine she had taken up, and began to work.

“It is very hard that your father should have left us so badly off,” continued Mrs. Bedell. “Of course he could not help it, but still”—

“Of course he could not help it,” said Dorothy stoutly.

“That is just what I said; but still he knew how many comforts I have always been accustomed to. Walking makes me quite ill,” and this delicate lady sank back in her chair quite exhausted at the idea.

“There is the underground railway, mamma,” said Dorothy; “or the omnibus,” she added, rather mischievously.

“The idea of such a thing!” said her mother crossly; “as if I should think of entering such horrid things.”

“You sent me in an omnibus the other day,” said Dorothy; “you did not think it would do me any harm.”

“You!” said her mother. “No, I should think you might go anywhere with your appearance.”

Dorothy flushed angrily, but controlled herself with an effort, and made no answer.

These sort of conversations often took place between mother and daughter. Poor Dorothy! she was young and passionate, very loving and sympathetic, and yet her mother thought her cold, and utterly wanting in affection, the more she was with her child, the more thoroughly she misunderstood her, and yet she really loved the girl; but so it was, the distance gradually widened between them, because their natures were utterly opposed to each other. Mr. Bedell had died suddenly about nine months before this time, leaving his affairs in rather an involved state;

the property of Wenden going necessarily to a distant cousin as he had no heir. When all the affairs were settled up, which took some time, it was discovered that his wife would have £500 a-year for herself and child: half of that sum would fall to Dorothy at her mother's death, the other half would revert to the Bedell family. As soon as things began to look settled, Mrs. Bedell determined to leave the country and live entirely in London. Dorothy was not consulted in this matter, or would have besought her mother to take a cottage somewhere near her old home. When it was announced to her that a small house had been taken for them in London by Mrs. Dickson, she was mute with astonishment and sorrow: how *could* she say good-bye to her dear old home, with all its associations! Truly the country *was* isolation to Mrs. Bedell—she had no sympathy with Nature, to her “a tree was just a tree and nothing more:” the sweet flowers spoke no lessons of love and patience to her soul; the seasons as they came by were merely Spring,

Summer, Autumn, and Winter, to her, without any higher meaning or teaching in their constant changes. But it was not so with Dorothy, hitherto Nature had been everything to her, as only those thrown entirely upon themselves for amusement and thought can understand. How could she give up the woods where she had sought for blue-bells and anemones year after year! — the lovely banks where, even so early as January, she had found the primroses hidden, the pond where she and Arthur had so often fished during those two happy summers, the window-seat in the old school-room, where he used to read to her, and tell her fairy tales; her old pony, the dog Smutty, all must be parted with for smoky streets and dismal stiff walks. Poor child! how she dreaded her London life! The one thing that made it bearable was the thought of being near the Dicksons. She loved Mrs. Dickson and Nina intensely, and Dolly longed to see her friend again. Her father's death had brought her face to face with the reality of dying for the first time, and

had filled her with solemn and serious thoughts. She had looked at her dead father once, and nothing in after life could efface that recollection. What did it all mean?—where was he now?—were thoughts which for the first time filled her mind. Her faith had been simple and unquestioning hitherto, but the Angel of Death had troubled the waters now, and they would be no more smooth until her soul had found its only rest in God, either in this world or the next. With her mind in this unsettled state, Dorothy took a mournful farewell of all her old pets and associations, Mrs. Bedell having unwillingly consented that “Smuttery” alone should accompany them to London.

CHAPTER X.

DOROTHY found her new life more interesting in some respects than she had anticipated. Constantly in the society of the Dicksons, and brought by them into a centre of the literary and musical world, her mind began to expand like a beautiful flower. Life to her was a great reality, to be *lived* not simply *passed through*. She was full of an earnest purpose, and yet felt puzzled as to how it was to be carried out. Had she put her thought into words, the question she would have asked herself would have been, "How can I live my life best?" It was not unlike the prayer of one long ago, "What would'st Thou

have me to do?" Yet she did not think of it as a prayer, for she had not yet found the Father. What she felt was a loving, sisterly feeling to all the world; a longing, that was born in her, to do something for somebody. Yet surely this was as the grain of mustard seed, which should some day become a great tree. The seed sown must ever shoot upwards, heaven-wards, God-wards, until even winged things shall lodge in the branches, and some poor wandering soul shall find a resting-place there for a season; for may we not entertain future angels unawares? I think it is true of all of us that our education only begins when we leave the school-room. For what is education? Is it not mental growth and development? We "do our lessons" and take in knowledge, and then after that life begins in earnest; then are the tares sown which spring up with the seed—and choke it sometimes; yet they must both grow together until the harvest. From having hitherto only studied Nature, this new world of literature and ideas—

to speak figuratively—almost took Dorothy's breath away. She was thirsting for Living Water, and she thought to find it in theology, science, art; she sought for it in the earthquake of modern thought, when the wonders of discovery are shaking the foundations of men's souls, their belief; and even making shipwreck of their faith. In the whirlwind of false doctrines, the restless running to and fro to do some great thing. By-and-by she would hear the still small voice. Theology, science, art, are good, wonderful, beautiful; but they are but means to an end. Mrs. Dickson had found the End, and she helped Dorothy as best she could, by love and patience—it was all she could do. We can place a telescope for another in the right direction to see some wonder in God's blue heaven above; but who among us can focus it for another?

CHAPTER XI.

MORE than a year had passed since Dorothy and her mother came to London, during which time she had been little into society, in consequence of her deep mourning. She had, of course, dined often at the Dickson's, and had met some clever and interesting men there ; and her friends soon discovered that she attracted a good deal of attention. Men liked to talk to this fresh young girl, with her bright manners, and high, deep thoughts. She was just the same to everyone, and there were those already who said she flirted ; but gentlemen knew better. There was a magnetism about the girl which drew people to her, but she

was utterly unconscious of it herself. It seems strange how seldom this rare gift is appreciated in others, and girls are blamed for what they are really not responsible for. It is that mysterious power of fascination, which is bestowed for weal or woe on some, both men and women.

There was to be a musical party at Kensington Garden Square, and Mrs. Bedell received a card of invitation; but when the day arrived she had (or imagined she had) too bad a head-ache to avail herself of it, so Dorothy went alone. The weather was hot, and she went in late, and slipped into the drawing-room, finding a comfortable seat in a bow-window; rather hidden from view, but opposite the door. She was dressed entirely in white, except for a black velvet brim to her drooping straw hat, which set off her delicate face to perfection. Someone was singing one of her favourite ballads, and she listened with a pleased expression. There was a purity in her whole appearance which was very striking. In a few minutes, while there was a cessation

in the music, the door slowly opened, and a young man came into the room. Curiously enough, Dorothy was looking towards the door at the moment, and their eyes met. He looked quickly round the room for the hostess, and shook hands with her.

Presently Nina came up to him. "How do you do?" she said. "Is there anyone you would like to be introduced to?" she asked, in her bright way. "Why! there is Dorothy!" as she suddenly caught sight of her friend. "I must introduce you to her; please come this way," and she went up to the bow-window. "Miss Bedell—Mr. Brackenbury."

Dorothy bowed, and looked at Thorold in her straight, direct way; then they chatted for a little while on ordinary subjects. In a few minutes Thorold was called away to the piano.

"Rather a nice man," thought Dorothy; "but what a sad face! He looks as if he had some great sorrow; he reminds me of a picture of some martyr that I have seen somewhere."

At this moment the piano struck up, and Thorold began Schubert's exquisite song "The Wanderer." There was an intense pathos in his singing, which went to Dorothy's heart, and she listened intently till the last bar of the accompaniment died away; then she drew a deep breath of pleasure. Thorold did not come back to her for some little time; then suddenly recollecting some music he had left on a table near where she sat, he came round to fetch it.

"Thank you for that song," Dorothy said simply.

He looked down at her with a pleased expression. "Are you fond of music?" he said.

"Yes, when it *is* music," answered Dorothy.

"How do you mean?"

"I mean, when music or singing express the soul of the musician; then it is beautiful," she replied, her face glowing, as it always did when she was moved on any subject.

"This girl has a beautiful soul," thought Thorold. He said, "I could see you liked music

by your face."

"Like it," said Dorothy; "I *love* it; you cannot tell what it is to me—it is my very dear friend, dearer to me than anything else in the world." Her eyes filled with tears as she spoke, and she flushed crimson as she suddenly remembered she was talking to a stranger.

Thorold looked at her almost sadly, "Have you many relations?" he asked.

"I have a mother," said Dorothy, coldly.

"This girl is not happy," thought this discerning young man; there is a great deal in the way a thing is said. "I feel as if I had seen you before," he remarked; "do you know the Dicksons well?"

"I have known them for years," she said; "I first came to this house six years ago to spend Christmas."

Thorold looked up quickly, "Did you act in some theatricals?" he asked.

"Yes, we had some one night," answered Dorothy. "Do you remember them?" she

added, in a surprised tone.

"I have never forgotten your face; you are the little match-girl," he said quietly.

"Yes, I am the match-girl, come to life again," said Dorothy naïvely.

"You are just the same."

"A little more alive, I hope," laughed Dorothy.

"Yes, very much alive," he answered; "but the little match-girl still."

"*Minus* the matches," suggested Dorothy.

"Yes, matchless, I should say," returned Thorold, answering a world of fun in the girl's eyes; "and as proud as—Lucifer," he added.

Dorothy laughed at this last remark.

The whole scene came before Thorold as if it had been yesterday—the sad little girl lighting her matches—the beautiful grandmother; then the last scene—the dead child lying on the ground.

At this moment Nina came up to them. "What fun you are having!" she said; "how I envy you!"

"Why?" inquired Dorothy; "aren't you having fun?"

"I should think not," said Nina; "I have had to talk to old fogeys all the afternoon."

"That implies that I am not an old fogey," said Thorold, laughing; "I do feel complimented."

"You are not old," retorted Nina; "but I do not say you are not a fogey. I must go," she added quickly, "and talk to that dreadful old General, he has had a wound in every successive war since the Peninsular, has a wooden leg, and is stone deaf"—this with a hopeless expression on her merry face.

"Beware of idols of wood and stone," said Thorold, warningly.

The girl laughed and went off. "No fear of my worshipping *him*," she said, looking over her shoulder in her pretty serio-comic way.

"I must go too," remarked Thorold; "good-bye, Miss Bedell. Shall you be at the dance here on the 12th?"

"I hope so," said Dolly, brightly.

Thorold went off, musing as he walked along. "What a pretty creature! Her face is never the same for two minutes; nor her temper either, I suspect. I hate a woman of moods and tenses," he muttered, almost impatiently, at the same time drawing his hand across his eyes. "What a comfort it is for a fellow to be engaged!—one can study human nature so much better from a disinterested point of view. I daresay that girl will be just like everyone else in a year or two. Pity if she is!" he thought.

CHAPTER XII.

NINA came running into Mrs. Bedell's house the following day, with that quick, light movement of hers, which always gave one the impression of a breath of fresh air, whenever she came into the room. "News! news!" she said gaily, "who do you think is coming home, Dolly?"—and she threw herself into a large arm-chair.

"Arthur!" said Dorothy, instantly and breathlessly.

"Right as usual, you wise child; read that," and she tossed a letter into Dorothy's lap.

The post-mark was Malta; it was addressed

to Mrs. Dickson—the letter ran thus ;—

“Our ship has been ordered home suddenly, and I hope to be with you in less than a week’s time. How I am longing to see you all, auntie, and Dolly too, who you say is living close by. I am a lieutenant now, and I am sure you will think it a stunning uniform. I wonder if Doll will like it. I suppose she is awfully pretty now. I am bringing a grey parrot for Nina ; he says, ‘I’m a timid, nervous man,’ and other ‘choice sentences. I hope Dolly will like a Maltese dog I have got for her, etc., etc.”

Dorothy put the letter down, “In less than a week ; oh ! Ninny !”

“He will be here for our dance,” said Nina.
“Dolly, why is your face like a catalogue ?”

“I give it up,” said Dorothy.

“Because it’s an index to the mind.”

“I’m sure that is original,” said Dorothy,
“because it is such a bad pun.”

Nina closed her eyes, and sighed deeply,
“Alas ! for me, that I was ‘born to blush un-

seen ;' but so it has ever been with real genius, it goes to its grave unloved and unappreciated : where shall I find a kindred spirit ?—where, O where ? ”

“ Echo answers—where ? ” said Dorothy.

“ You will think of this when I am gone, Dorothy,” remarked Nina, with severity, “ when I am in my quiet grave.”

So saying, and impressing a somewhat rapid and violent kiss on Dorothy's cheek, she walked majestically out of the room.

Arthur Haseldine had been home once during the last five years, and then only for a week. He had stayed at the Dicksons', and had only run down to Wendon for a day or two. Dorothy longed to see him exceedingly. He had stood in the place of a brother in her thoughts through all these years, and had always called her “ his little sister.” When she last saw him he had been even handsomer than when she knew him first. Nina had told him he was much too handsome for a sailor, to which he had respond-

ed, "Handsome is that handsome does." Indeed, this seemed to be the motto of his life ; his high principle and courage had been several times commended by his superior officers, and already his influence on board ship was felt and appreciated. After Nina had left, Dorothy sat for some time in a brown study ; she was thinking that things in life were pretty evenly balanced after all. Only this morning how depressed she had felt ! Her mother had been more than usually querulous and exacting ; and the girl had asked herself, almost angrily, in the weariness of her mind, why her life should be like this ? Why should her home be so much sadder than Nina's ? Why should her mother suppress every good and noble thought that she gave utterance to, and call it romance and affectation to speak on any but the most ordinary subjects ? But this feeling did not last long. Dorothy's sweet, hopeful nature and healthy mind could not long cherish dark thoughts, and she was too unselfish to brood upon herself, and imagine she

was either a heroine or a martyr. Nevertheless, she had the good, honest strength in her which goes to make both, in their highest sense, though she did not know it. She had taken refuge in her usual remedy, a walk in the Kensington Gardens. When she came back Nina had arrived with Arthur's letter. It is the old story of the nettle and the dock-leaf, all through our lives; the sorrow and the healing are very close together for those who will be healed, and the Great Healer is the nearest of all if we could only see Him.

Dorothy came back from her brown study with new strength and vigour to fight the battle of life. She met her mother with a happy face and bright smile, for had she not a great hope to look forward to? Her mother marvelled at the change, and was kinder than usual. This set Dorothy thinking again. With all the self-accusing of a noble and true nature, she knew she was often to blame in her conduct towards her mother. Her high spirit could ill brook the

constant *keeping down* of her life, and she often answered in proud, sharp words which ought never to have been spoken. "Was she not her mother after all?" she thought sadly; "and was she not bound to submit to her in all things?" The girl had much reverence in her composition; she was not naturally overbearing and unmanageable. Hers was simply a great nature imprisoned, and longing to be set free. She had not yet learnt the glorious service of suffering; the dignity of unjust imprisonment.

CHAPTER XIII.

ARTHUR arrived at Kensington Garden Square on the 11th, bringing the parrot and the Maltese dog. How well and happy he looked, Dorothy thought, as she watched him with glad eyes. How they all talked ! there was not much politeness about it ; sometimes all together. Then Arthur told them of all the things he had seen and done—the wonders of the places he had been to, the beautiful things he had seen. Then came a breathless pause, as he pictured to them a terrible storm, when shipwreck had seemed imminent, and then the wind had

suddenly shifted round, and there had come a great calm. Then there was all the home news to tell; all the births and marriages, and deaths, which had taken place since they last talked together. It took the whole of the next day to discuss these matters, and then on Thursday morning preparations had to be made for the dance in the evening. What young girl does not know the pleasant excitement of preparing for a dance in her own home? Of course, I speak of a house where means are limited. There are the flowers to arrange and make the most of, the tempting fruit to lay out on the sideboard; then comes the upholsterer with the drugget; the servants looking in at the door, with important faces, to ask some question; the crimson-faced cook, slightly irritable, but really enjoying the opportunity for showing off her skill; the heart-sickening fear that comes at intervals lest all should not go off well. Nina, and Dorothy (who, of course, was helping) were going through it all. How tired and merry they

felt alternately!—and how provoking Arthur was when he *would* want them to go out with him!—yet how they missed him when they heard him shut the hall-door behind him, and go off by himself! At last everything was ready, and Dorothy went home to read to her mother and rest, till it was time to dress.

The Dicksons were sensible people, who did not lie in bed all the morning and sit up half the night, so they fixed their parties from nine o'clock till one. Yet people always said they were the pleasantest in London. In the afternoon Dorothy went up to look at her dress, which had come home while she was out. It was a delicate white gauze mixed with satin, looped here and there with trailing sprays of trefoil. Dorothy looked at her long white gloves. "I wonder," she thought, as she secured a button here and there, "if that nice Mr. Brackenbury will ask me to dance with him. I have promised Arthur the first and third waltzes."

Soon after nine she kissed her mother and

drove off. When she arrived at the Dicksons', but few of the guests had come, but as she entered the drawing-room two pairs of eyes were fixed upon her, Thorold had been one of the first to arrive, and he and Arthur were standing near the door as Dorothy went in. How lovely she looked they both thought, with that sweet unconscious high look in her face, which made her so different to other girls. Her dress fitted her perfectly, thoroughly covering her shoulders, yet sufficiently showing her white skin; her hair completely without ornament. She shook hands with Mr. Dickson, whom she had not seen in the morning, and nodded and smiled to Arthur and Nina. Nina looked exceedingly pretty too; she wore a pale yellow dress, trimmed with roses of the same colour, and gold coins on her neck and hair.

Thorold immediately went and shook hands with Dorothy. "May I have the pleasure of the first waltz?" he said.

"I am engaged for the first," said Dorothy;

"but will give you the second with pleasure."

"Thank you," he said gravely, putting his name on her programme. "I suppose you expect to have a good time?"

"That will entirely depend upon my partners," answered Dorothy, mischievously. I doubt if she had said the sharpest thing whether it would ever have given offence, there was always such a sweet merry contradicting look in her eyes which seemed to soften everything she said.

Thorold laughed, and went off to talk to Nina. Somehow he suddenly felt a constraint in talking to Dorothy.

Arthur came up presently. "Why, Dorothy, how lovely you look!" he said, with all the familiarity of an old friend.

"I am so glad you think so," she answered simply. She was really pleased that Arthur should think she looked well. All women like admiration, I think; but there is a difference. A good woman only cares for it from those she loves, another sort of woman craves for it from

everyone. The evening began with the "Lancers." Nina, as before arranged, dancing with Arthur, and Dorothy with a rather heavy young man whom she had met once or twice at the house. Then came the first waltz with Arthur, then a rest while a gallop was going on.

Thorold came as the second waltz struck up.

"I hope you have not forgotten your promise?"

"No," returned Dorothy, "I was afraid *you* had forgotten."

"She will not speak in that humble way in a year or two," he thought, "when she knows her power."

Mrs. Dickson watched them as they went round the room. "How well those two look together," she said to herself; "they are so unlike, and yet there is a curious similarity of expression. They both look so good; I wish something might come of it," she thought, as she turned away.

After their dance was over, Dorothy was rather tired, and Thorold took her to a seat on the staircase, close to a conservatory. "Do you

think you will like a London life?" he said, as he sat down beside her.

"I shall like it if I can do some good in the world," she answered gently.

"In what sort of way do you mean?"

"I mean," she said, "that I have no right to come to this house, or any house, and wear pretty dresses and flowers, when the hands that made these things are wasting away for want of fresh air and food"—there was a high grave light in her face as she spoke, which Thorold had never seen there before.

"Then do you think it wrong to go into society!" he asked, looking at her with new interest.

"No," she said, "I cannot see clearly that it is wrong to enjoy any pleasure or happiness that is put in our way, provided it is not at the expense of the happiness of another; and yet I feel there *is* grievous wrong somewhere," she added sadly, "and I would give anything to be able to do something to relieve it."

"But surely influence is as great a power as active work?"

"Yes, when you have it," said Dorothy.

"But, excuse me, everyone has it," answered Thorold; "your face is an influence." He did not mean to compliment her, he was only saying exactly what he felt. "People with your appearance cannot go through the world without influencing others; a really beautiful woman—when I say this I mean where the face is the reflection of a beautiful soul,—a woman of this sort has more power in her hands than a dozen of the ordinary type of district visitors."

"Then do you think the system of parish organization is bad and useless?"

"Do not mistake me for a moment," said Thorold quickly; "I think Church Establishment and parish organization are our national safeguard against crime and starvation, and I feel convinced that when Disestablishment takes place in this country, which I believe is not far off, then discord and poverty will go hand-in-

hand. Were every man and woman to act upon principle then would a National Church be a mistake; but that can never be. In this sinning world there will ever be men and women who are unprincipled, and act only from the impulses of their own selfish and wayward hearts; and as long as this is the case there must be a system of order to keep things straight."

"I do not quite understand what you mean about 'influence,'" said Dorothy timidly.

"I mean that when a man or woman ceases to go into society a great power is lost for good or evil."

"It is terrible to think of," said Dorothy, almost solemnly.

"It is not terrible if we remember our power and use it rightly," he answered earnestly; "it is a glorious gift that can never be acquired, and can never be lost by those on whom it is bestowed." He looked up suddenly; "Do you know we have lost three dances?"

"I have enjoyed this conversation a great deal

more," said Dorothy.

Thorold winced. "Nevertheless, I must take you back to the drawing-room," he said almost coldly.

They went up the stairs. When they got back to the ball-room Arthur came up. "You have missed my waltz, Dolly," he said reproachfully. "I did not like to disturb you," he added in a mocking tone.

Dorothy coloured, "Then it was your own fault that you lost the dance," she said proudly.

"I did not lose it," he answered, in the same tone ; "I danced with Nina."

Dorothy looked at him quickly, with angry tears in her eyes. what could be the matter?— he had never spoken to her in this way before ? She went and sat down on an empty chair a little out of sight. Arthur had gone off after his last remark ; Thorold too had left her side, and was talking to Mrs. Dickson. After a few minutes Nina came up bringing a stranger to be introduced. Dorothy danced twice with him,

and he took her down to supper, much to her disgust. Afterwards Thorold came up to say good-night.

"Are you going so early," said Dorothy, in a surprised tone.

"Yes, hot rooms and late hours don't agree with me," he answered, with a mocking laugh.

"Then you certainly ought not to stay," she said coldly. He noticed the change in her tone, looked into her face long and earnestly, then held her hand for a moment, and was gone. Poor Dorothy! how dull and miserable she felt! Arthur seemed angry, and had only danced once with her, during which he seemed constrained and silent, and she had felt glad when it was over. Then Thorold, who had seemed so kind during the first part of the evening, had hardly been near her again except to say good-bye; and then how ill and tired he seemed, and how strangely he had looked at her! "Why should she feel like this?—and what did it all mean?" she asked herself angrily, "surely——?" The

red flushed over her cheek, and she dropped her face in her hands for a second ; then slowly and wearily she rose to go. She said "good-night" to Mrs. Dickson and Nina ; then Arthur, who was standing near, came up, "Let me take you down," he said gravely ; then, putting her into a cab with the servant who had come for her, he wished her "good-night," and she drove off.

CHAPTER XIV.

THOROLD walked slowly from the Dicksons' house on the night of the dance. He felt as one in a dream—he would not go home yet, he thought; and turned off, walking on heedlessly through streets and squares. He saw it all!—Love had come to him at last: and he knew now that what he had felt for Agatha Fairfax was but the counterfeit; but, alas! it had come too late, too late! What could he do?—what ought he to do? And then the horrible thought rose to his mind that he was bound in honour to do *nothing*; but to go on as though Dorothy's sweet

presence had never crossed his life ; and never to see her face again. He covered his face with his hands in agony, and then the temptation came to him. After all, was it just to marry one woman loving another ?—was it fair to Agatha ? He almost shuddered when he thought of her. Then other thoughts came surging through his mind ; thoughts of what life would be with Dorothy always by his side—this high-souled woman, with her beautiful thoughts and bright ways, whose every word seemed like an inspiration : how she would help him to be good and noble ; how he would shield her from every rough wind, and guard her mind from every doubt which her thoughtful nature might bring before it. Then the thought of Agatha came before him ; poor Agatha ! Who had waited so long and patiently for him !—and now the time had come when he was in a position to marry her. Could he forsake her ?—would not everyone say he had behaved basely, cruelly, if he did, and would not his own heart echo their opinion ? He went slowly home

to his lodgings, and all through the night the terrible conflict went on. At last he came to a decision. He would see Dorothy once, and only once, again, and he would put his fate into her hands. He would bring in the subject casually and carelessly, guarding his secret well; and he would be entirely guided by her answer. He had perfect faith in her judgment, knowing instinctively that her clear mind would take the right view of the case. After all, he said to himself, he had no reason to think that she looked upon him with more interest than on any other acquaintance; how could she, knowing him so little?—for they had only met three or four times. And yet a great throb of hope passed through him as he remembered her pained expression when he left her so coldly and abruptly on the previous night. Thorold knew, in his honest and good heart, that he had not once tried to make Dorothy care for him. Feeling so safe in his engagement, and having that humility of character which is to be found in all true natures,

he had talked to Dorothy simply because he felt that their ideas agreed on many points, and her young fresh mind interested him. Now he felt that this must cease for ever; he must never again seek her society, unless——: and he turned away resolutely from the thought.

CHAPTER XV.

ONE day about a fortnight after the dance at the Dicksons', Dorothy went for her usual walk in Kensington Gardens. She looked older and paler than on that eventful night, and walked somewhat wearily. She was turning round to come home by the broad walk, when she saw a gentleman coming towards her. She was full of her own thoughts, and did not notice him particularly until he came close to her and raised his hat. Her heart gave a great throb of pleasure as she looked up and saw that it was Thorold.

“ Good morning, Miss Bedell ! Taking a

constitutional, I suppose. If you will allow me, I will walk back part of the way with you." He spoke coldly, but there was a troubled look in his eyes.

Dorothy made some indifferent reply, and they walked on a little way, talking on various unimportant subjects, but with some constraint on both sides. Presently a young man and woman passed them laughing and talking gaily.

"Poor things!" said Thorold bitterly.

"Why do you say that?" asked Dorothy; "I believe they are engaged to be married."

"Very likely," said Thorold; "but they are walking in a fool's paradise all the same. Perhaps they will find some day before they are married that they have made a mistake, and then what are they to do? Now, Miss Bedell," he added, turning round to Dorothy, in an almost satirical tone, "you seem to have very decided opinions on all subjects. I should like to know what your feelings are on the all important subject of breaking off an engagement?"

"I shall be very happy to enlighten you," answered Dorothy, in the same tone.

"Well, a fellow I know," said Thorold, "has run himself into an engagement, and now, just as he is going to be married, he finds himself for the first time in love—really in love this time," he added vehemently, "with another woman."

Dorothy looked round at him with surprise; there was something so strange in his manner, and his face was unutterably sad. She looked, and suddenly, with her quick woman's instinct, she guessed everything. She clasped her hands tightly together; for one moment she wavered, then she answered steadily and gently, "Certainly he ought to keep to his engagement; it can never be right to accept happiness for oneself at the expense of another."

"Is that really your opinion?" said Thorold slowly.

"It is indeed," answered Dorothy, avoiding his eyes. "I think God will always support us

in doing right," she added, with intense gentleness. As she spoke, they reached a turning in the gardens.

"Here our roads part," said Thorold. He raised his hat, but without looking at her, then walked swiftly away. "She does not know," he thought; "but she has spoilt my life. Would to God that we had never met!"

CHAPTER XVI.

DOROTHY found her way home somehow that day, but *how* she never knew. Yet she went about day after day, she did not have a fever, or go into consumption, as love-lorn maidens are supposed to do ; but her heart simply died within her. The strongest, truest natures are those who do not make an outward show of grief, but keep their sorrow, as it were, sacred between themselves and God. You only know of its existence, perhaps, by noble actions done, and true, fearless words spoken, actions and words which would never have been but for the sorrow, for

“Gold must be tried by fire,

As the heart must be tried by pain,”

only when we learn to sit loosely to earthly things, comes the life of self-denial, the intense sympathy for and with those who are suffering, having known and felt what they feel, for who can understand pain but those who have felt it!

Poor child! she little knew that the worst was to come yet! The days went on with a good deal of sameness. Dorothy saw much of the Dicksons, and Nina's bright unconscious influence did a good deal towards soothing the aching mental pain which sometimes seemed more than she could bear, though the Dicksons were so utterly unaware of the cause of Dorothy's sadness. Perhaps this is best in some cases; where one would be kindest, one is so apt to weigh one's words, and the very fear of hurting is the cause of our doing so very often. In fact, so very little *had* happened, that Dolly often wondered within herself at the change which had come over her life. She even looked

at the thing from a matter-of-fact point of view, and it seemed very much like this—She had met this man casually, as we should say, perhaps not more than half-a-dozen times; they had then parted without a word of love-making, and yet she knew, as those who really love only can know, that her life was totally changed. In future new work, new cares must occupy her. There was a depth in the girl's nature which few people were aware of, and, as is generally the case with such characters, she was intensely reserved. It was a great *fault* in her character, there was much pride mixed up in it, and it kept her from a good deal of sympathy that she might otherwise have had. I doubt if there had been more fellow-feeling between herself and her mother whether if in this great event of her life she would have confided in her. She would suffer alone, as others had done before her, and sometimes the thought would come, with healing in its wings, of One who had "trodden the wine-press alone" and had conquered. From this time Dorothy read

with almost feverish eagerness, poetry, essays, novels, all passed through her hands, and had her mind not been of the steadiest she would have been in peril of imbibing some of the startling theories of the day ; as it was, she had too much ballast to take up any particular hobby, but being young, and to a certain extent inexperienced, she became at times unsettled and harrassed on different subjects. In her feverish unrest she had at times an over-powering desire to do some great thing, but how was she to begin ? She spoke to Mrs. Dickson one day on the subject, and was listened to by her with sympathizing patience. Mrs. Dickson had long seen some trouble or care in Dorothy's life, but was, of course, ignorant of the cause, nor was Dolly likely to confide in her—a kind of loyalty kept her back from confiding in any other friend to the exclusion of her mother. One day Mrs. Dickson asked Dorothy to go with her to their church, and as her mother was not well, and intended staying indoors, Dorothy was free to do

so. It was the church to which she had gone seven years before, when she had spent Christmas with the Dicksons. The music was about as perfect as it could possibly be. It was neither gloomy nor boisterous, neither composed entirely of Gregorian chants on the one hand, nor prolonged compositions of an inferior order on the other ; but it carried out the idea of Praise in its highest sense. The choir showed themselves to have been trained by no ordinary master, and sang with the understanding as well as with the heart. The sound of the organ fell upon Dorothy's troubled soul with "infinite calm ;" and then came the sermon. The Vicar preached, the very same man who had so impressed Dorothy's mind when she was a little child. Curiously enough, though she had been so long in London, she had never entered this church since those childish days ; probably because she and her mother lived some way off. Now, when she was asked to do so, she was glad, and a sudden hope sprang up in her heart that, perhaps, here she would be helped

in some way. The sermon was taken from the words "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them." It could hardly be called a *sermon*, but Dorothy sat absorbed, drinking in every word. The subject of the sermon was—sympathy. "Is there anyone here," said the preacher, "who is devoid of human sympathy?—if so, I speak specially to him or her. May God help such an one, and give him peace. It were impossible for such a being to live for long, were it not that there are two other forms of sympathy, one *in* this great world, the other *above* it. I mean, first the tender, unasked soothing of nature, the giving forth of sweetness from flowers, and birds, and elements. The influence of sweet loving looks of those around us, though we may not know their names, these though we may only meet them in the streets and lanes of our city, are as 'apples of gold in pictures of silver,' a great disinfectant amidst the contagion of evil. But there is still that highest

sympathy, perfectly healing in its power, perfectly resting in its effects—I mean, the Heart of God. Only in perfect union with that Heart can we find perfect rest and perfect love. But I have no doubt that to some here my words seem as idle tales. Dear friends, I do not *blame* you for your doubts and bitter thoughts, I know for a certainty that if you really seek the truth all clouds will roll away, and you will be one with Him who gave you life, who made you a living soul. Only as we look into the unseen shall we be in unison with the Heart of God ; and knowing our weakness, and the desire in each one of us to love that which is human and tangible, He gave Himself to us in human form, that without idolatry we might worship and imitate One who in all afflictions and temptations felt as we feel, and bore the cross beneath which *we* so often stagger and fall.” In conclusion, he said that, as sore and sad hearts were soonest healed by *giving out* sympathy, he would be glad to speak to anyone who needed advice, and desired to do any active

work for God.

Dorothy hardly spoke at all on her way home, every word seemed as if it had been specially intended for her, and she made up her mind to seek out some work to do. The preacher's calm, grand face, seemed to have given her comfort and hope. Alas! poor child! she needed it all to help her to bear the sorrow that was coming upon her.

CHAPTER XVII.

DOROTHY came down early, as usual, on the morning after the event in the last chapter, opened and cut the newspaper slowly and mechanically, and glanced down the first column. Suddenly her eye caught these words :—

“ On the 12th inst., at the Church of St. Paul’s, Wixham, Sussex, by Rev. Robert Fairfax, father of the bride, Henry Thorold Brackenbury, son of the late Henry Brackenbury, to Agatha, eldest daughter of Rev. R. Fairfax.”

Dorothy put down the paper, and passed her hand over her face, then sat down and went

over the events of the last few months. Was it, indeed, Miss Fairfax, whom she had known so well and loved so much, who had brought all this bitterness upon her? and yet she could not help it, as Dolly's honest nature allowed, through all the sorrow; but if it had only been a stranger how much easier it would have been to bear! Oh, God! if she might have only been spared this extra drop of bitterness in her cup! Dorothy sat stunned for a little while, then her mother came down, and she had to go through the long breakfast as usual; then, at last, she was free to go up to her own room. There she sat down, and covered her face with her hands, thinking, thinking, all the time. How weary she grew of thought; at last she put on her hat, and went out of the house. She wandered up one street and down another, until at last she found herself near the church where she had been the day before. The door was open, and Dorothy stole inside almost unconsciously. How calm, and still, and peaceful it seemed; she

sank down on her knees, and a mute appeal went up to Him "who pitieth His children." The quiet and rest seemed to soothe her spirit, and brought silent healing tears to her eyes.

She remained long kneeling thus, when she heard a voice close by her side, speaking to her. "Can I do anything for you, friend?" it said, and, looking up, she saw Mr. Fortesque standing near her. His calm, kind eyes looked down upon her with a world of help and sympathy in them.

"Give me something to do?" she answered, almost passionately.

"Have you no home ties," he asked gravely.

"Yes," answered Dolly.

"Then do your utmost duty there first," he said, almost sternly.

"I do try," said Dolly, humbly and sweetly.

"Then give me your address," he returned, his voice and face changing, "and I will write or call upon you about other work in a few days, "meanwhile our Father is with you; always

remember that." Dorothy's head went down once more, and she buried her face in her hands. When she looked up again Mr. Fortesque was gone.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DOROTHY left the church this time, as she had done before, with a feeling of peace in her heart. It seemed to her that her sorrow was lightened now that she knew the worst. All had been mystery hitherto ; she had been the arbiter of her own fate, and had put the seal on her own sorrow. There was no blame to anyone ; and she would strive day and night to put the remembrance of it all from her mind for evermore : and surely time would deaden the sense of loneliness and desolation that oppressed her now. She set herself steadily to work to do anything that came to her hand for others, and looked out anxiously for news from Mr. Fortesque.

Some days passed and she heard nothing, but the very fact of thinking about future work seemed to give her fresh interest. At length one day, when she came home from her walk, she found a letter and visiting card awaiting her. Mr. Fortesque had left the note himself, and she had missed him! How sorry she was not to have seen him, for already he seemed like an old friend. The letter was to the effect that a friend of his, living at the East End, was most anxious to find lady-workers for his parish, for visiting the poor as well as nursing the sick, and he also wished to get up some rational evening amusements as often as possible. Dorothy read the letter, and then went to her mother to consult her on the subject. Mrs. Bedell was some time before she would give her consent, but at last did so reluctantly, on the condition that she never went alone after dark, and only once a week. Dorothy had to be satisfied with this, and wrote to say she was ready to begin her work at once.

CHAPTER XIX.

FIVE years have passed away. It is a large airy room in Whitechapel (there are not *many* to be found in that neighbourhood); good engravings are hung round the walls, some comfortable chairs are scattered about the room, magazines and books of various kinds are lying about in delightful confusion. Some girls are reading, others are writing in copy-books, and in one corner is a cottage piano, with a black drawing-board beside it, on which are the bass and treble clefs clearly defined in chalk. At the piano sits our old friend Dorothy, and round her is a group of girls, to whom she is teaching their notes.

She is five-and-twenty now, but is even more lovely than ever. Her work seems to agree with her. Her eyes are more grave and earnest than they used to be, but have lost none of their sweetness, and her expression is more calm and settled than before. About two years after Dorothy began her work at Whitechapel, Mrs. Bedell's health began to fail, and she gradually became weaker and weaker. Dorothy nursed her with unceasing care and love. Whether under the influence of so much affection, or in consequence of the visits of Mr. Fortesque, who came and went constantly, Mrs. Bedell's nature seemed to soften, to expand, during this last illness, and it seemed to Dorothy that her mother's love was given to her only to be taken away again by death. Nevertheless, these last few months were very sweet to her; but when, at last, the mother clasped her pale thin arms round her child, and passed away to the World of Light and Love, Dorothy was speechless with sorrow and grief.

She stayed two or three months with Mrs.

Dickson, then told her that she had decided upon her future life. She wished to live near her poor people, so as to make their interests as much as possible her own, which she could not do so well from a distance. Mrs. Dickson, as the girl's guardian, was perplexed. Ought she to advise her to give up the idea just because she was young and attractive?—and, if she did so, would Dorothy be any happier, or half *as* happy, as she would be in following the bent of her own inclinations and convictions. Yet, as she looked at her, a pang shot through her heart; it seemed such banishment, such a loss to society, of one so apparently intended to shine there. After a day or two of consideration in the matter, Mrs. Dickson decided to let the girl have her own way for six months, at the end of which time she would be able to know exactly how the life suited her, and whether she would like to continue her work or not. Dorothy was to a certain extent her own mistress. As already said, she was now five-and-twenty, and had a sufficiency of means

to live where she liked. Mrs. Dickson took three airy rooms as near Dorothy's work as possible, and she and Nina insisted upon beautifying them, till, as Dorothy laughingly remarked, there was "hardly room to turn round!" One of these rooms was specially for her poor people, the other two were her own sitting-room and bed-room. Here, then, after her six months of probation, Dorothy decided to remain, and it is here we find her at the beginning of this chapter. She is looking grave to-day, for Arthur Hazeldine has been home again, and only the day before he left, almost beside himself with sorrow at leaving her, he had asked for that love which, alas! he had felt in his own heart he could never have. Dorothy was utterly pained and grieved at his sorrow, and would have given worlds to have been able to give a different answer. But she dare not be untrue to her own instincts, nor *could* she pretend a love that she did not feel. She thought the old love was dead and buried in her heart; but other love still seemed a thing im-

possible to her. She saw much of Mr. Fortesque, and loved and revered him with the affection of perfect friendship. He was, in her mind's eye her ideal of almost perfect manhood; and as for him, he sunned himself in her presence, and dared not think of anything beyond, so satisfying was the fact of seeing her almost daily. These were almost the only men she saw and knew really well; others came and went, bent on work for those around them, and as such she knew them, and had always a kind smile and a ready hand for all.

CHAPTER XX.

It is Christmas again, and Dorothy and her friends are all as busy as bees with decorations, entertainments, etc. Some charades had been arranged to take place in the large school-room, and Mr. Fortesque had promised to bring down some friends to help in the parts.

One day he said to Dorothy, "I am going to bring a new friend to-morrow, Miss Bedell; you will find him a most efficient help in your work: there is nothing he would not do for the public good."

"By all means bring him," said Dorothy

brightly ; “ there is plenty for him to do.”

“ You will think him rather quiet and grave, perhaps,” said Mr. Fortesque ; “ but he lost his wife about a year and a half ago, and that may account for it.”

The next day dawned fair and bright, and Dorothy was hard at work from early morning. Late in the afternoon she was busily engaged putting up some decorations, and humming a tune while she did so, when the school-room door opened, and Mr. Fortesque walked slowly in, followed by——Thorold Brackenbury.

Dorothy looked quickly round at the new-comer ; then, indeed, all her self-possession seemed to leave her for a moment. She bowed hurriedly, made some trifling excuse, and left the room. Our old friend Thorold—for it was indeed he—seemed equally bewildered, “ That lady’s name is——?” he said.

“ Miss Bedell,” answered Mr. Fortesque quietly.

“ Ah ! I thought so,” said Thorold, recovering

himself with an effort ; " I met her some years ago at the house of some friends."

" No one who has once met Miss Bedell is likely to forget her, I should think," said Mr. Fortesque drily.

In a few minutes Dorothy came back, calm and herself again.

Thorold came up to her. There was a glad eagerness in his eyes and manner, " May we not shake hands as old friends ?" he said.

Dorothy gave him her hand, and he took it in his firm grasp ; such a hand-shake it was, as if he would never let it go again. Dorothy felt as if in a dream. She was for the time being almost stupefied with happiness, but could not yet realize all it meant. Why had he come here ? Did he know he should meet her ? And his wife was dead, her childhood's friend ; she wished she could feel more sorry, but the joy of seeing him again swallowed up every other feeling for the present.

At last, after an awkward pause, they found it

absolutely necessary to return to business matters.

"May I help you with your work for these people?" Thorold asked quietly, but looking at her with all his heart in his eyes.

"I shall be ever so much obliged," said Dorothy, looking away.

"Then I will come down to you to-morrow afternoon."

"We can arrange the charades then," Dorothy answered, her self-possession coming back under his quiet manner.

"Will you oblige me by having 'The Little Match-girl?'" asked Thorold, "for 'Auld lang syne?'" he added, looking round for Mr. Fortesque. Dorothy looked round also; but Mr. Fortesque was gone.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE next few days were indeed happy ones for Dorothy and Thorold. They worked on together, in that perfect harmony which only perfect love can give ; and though as yet no words of love had passed between them, they read each other's hearts, and were more than satisfied. Mr. Fortesque helped them, with other friends, but seemed to avoid coming into contact with Dorothy as much as possible, though she, with all the unintentional selfishness of great happiness, did not notice any difference in him. The charades and entertainments were all planned and arranged by Christmas Eve, and Dorothy was left alone at

last. It was settled that she was to go to Mrs. Dickson's for Christmas Day, but she declared she would not leave her people until late in the evening before. At about five o'clock she was sitting, very tired from her work, dreaming of the perfect happiness of the last few days, when her maid opened the door gently, and Thorold was by her side.

"Dorothy," he said, "you know why I am here. You know what I want to make my life more blest than any words can express. Do you love me, Dorothy?" He came close to her, and for all the answer she put her two sweet hands into his.

"My heart is altogether yours," she said simply.

"My own! my faithful one!" he answered, taking her to his heart.

A blissful Christmas Eve indeed!

CHAPTER XXII.

THE wedding of Dorothy Bedell and Thorold Brackenbury was uncommon, and decidedly characteristic. She was married in purest white certainly, but the ceremony took place at the church nearest to her People, and Nina was her only bridesmaid. But she did not want for guests; every nook and corner of the old church was crowded with eager, loving faces, and many weary hearts and eyes that were strangers to tears melted at the sight of the beautiful white lady

who had given her sweet young life up to them. Dorothy's "People's room" was spread out with such a dinner as very few there had ever tasted before, and she would almost have liked to stay with them, to see their merriment, but could not refuse to go to Mrs. Dickson's house for the wedding breakfast she had *insisted* upon having there. The only drawback to their complete happiness at the service was that Mr. Fortesque had quietly, but steadily, refused to be present. He gave no reason except complaining of illness, and disappeared a few days before the wedding. People said he had gone abroad for his health. There was no perceptible change in his manner towards either of them, except perhaps an added quietness, and greater absence of all thought of self, if possible. It was arranged that our bride and bridegroom were to live as near as possible to Dorothy's People, so that they might work

together amongst them after Thorold came home from his office in the evenings. It was an ideal marriage, which never lost its romance, because heaven-made, and because no tinge of selfishness had marred the character of either.

THE END.



